

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 DOTE-00 /080 W

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R 030719Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6577

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, JA, PINT

SUBJ: GOJ PUNISHES RAILWAY WORKERS INVOLVED IN DECEMBER '75

"RIGHT TO STRIKE" STRIKE

REF: 75 TOKYO 18063

1. JAPAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS (NR) ANNOUNCED JAN 31 IMPOSITION OF DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AGAINST APPROXIMATELY 5,400 PARTICIPANTS IN LAST DECEMBER'S 8-DAY RAIL STRIKE AND FILING OF DAMAGE SUIT AGAINST TWO RAIL UNIONS TO RECOVER LOSSES IT SUFFERED AS RESULT OF STRIKE. PUNISHMENTS RANGE FROM OUTRIGHT DISMISSAL OF 15 UNION LEADERS (WHO THEREBY LOSE RETIREMENT BENEFITS) TO SUSPENSIONS, WAGE CUTS, AND LETTERS OF CENSURE IN STRIKERS PERSONNEL FILES. SOHYO AFFILIATED NATIONAL RAILWAY (KOKURO) AND ENGINEERS (DORO) UNIONS IMMEDIATELY REACTED BY LAUNCHING WEEK LONG WORK TO RULE DRIVE ON FREIGHT LINES, AND BY VOWING TO CARRY STILL ANOTHER APPEAL AGAINST GOJ TO ILO (THIS TIME ON GROUNDS THAT SUIT AGAINST LABOR UNION FOR STRIKE DAMAGES BARRED BY JAPANESE LABOR CODE.

2. COUNCIL OF REPUBLIC ENTERPRISE UNIONS (KOROKYO) ALSO JOINED FRAY, WITH CALL FOR A ONE DAY WALKOUT OF RAILWAY,  
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SUBWAY, POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH WORKERS IN MID-MARCH AND FURTHER

STRIKES IN EARLY APRIL LINKED TO SPRING WAGE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. PRIME MINISTER MIKI, IN DIET DEBATE, JAN 31, CALLED JNR ACTION "REASONABLE RESPONSE TO ILLEGAL STRIKE," TRANSPORT MINISTER KIMURA REVIVED LAST DECEMBER'S ARGUMENT THAT STRIKE HAD THREATENED PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT, SEVERAL LDP LEADERS SAID PUNISHMENTS TOO LENIENT AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (WHOSE PRINCIPAL SUPPORT GROUP DOMEI LABOR FEDERATION, STRONGLY OPPOSED "RIGHT TO STRIKE" STRIKE) HAILED JNR ANNOUNCEMENT. OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES, LED BY SOCIALISTS, PREDICTABLY CHARGED THAT RULING PARTY AND NOT SOHYO UNIONS TO BLAME FOR LAST DECEMBER'S STRIKE SINCE IT HAD NOT FULFILLED IN TIME ITS "PROMISE" TO ANNOUNCE ITS POSITION ON PUBLIC CORPORATION EMPLOYEES RIGHT TO STRIKE. NEITHER GOJ NOR OPPOSITION SEEMED DISPOSED, HOWEVER, TO RAISE BASIC RIGHT TO STRIKE ISSUE AGAIN SO PRIME MINISTER MIKI'S FIRM STATEMENT OF LAST DECEMBER LIKELY TO REMAIN GOJ'S FINAL WORD ON SUBJECT AT LEAST FOR LIFE OF MIKI CABINET.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PUBLIC CORPORATIONS HERE NORMALLY TAKE THEIR TIME IN INSTITUTING DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AGAINST STRIKERS (RAILROAD WORKERS WHO WALKED OUT IN APRIL 1974 NOT PUNISHED UNTIL MAY 1975) THIS TIME LDP LEADERSHIP EXERTED CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE (MUCH OF IT PUBLICLY) ON JNR TO TAKE ACTION WHILE MEMORY OF UNPOPULAR "RIGHT TO STRIKE" STRIKE STILL FRESH IN PUBLIC'S MIND.

5. LDP LEADERSHIP PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED, HOWEVER, THAT SOHYO RAILROAD UNIONS, IN REACTING TO JNR ANNOUNCEMENT, CAREFULLY AVOIDED CALLING FOR ANY NEW DISRUPTION OF RAILROAD PASSENGER SERVICE. ANY FURTHER INCONVENIENCING OF COMMUTING PUBLIC BY SOHYO WOULD HAVE PLAYED RIGHT INTO LDP'S HANDS BY PROVIDING IT WITH STILL MORE CAMPAIGN AMMUNITION AGAINST SOHYO'S PRINCIPAL POLITICAL BACKERS, THE SOCIALISTS, IN FORTHCOMING LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS.

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** ELAB, PINT, JA  
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